



THE GIRL IN THE  
MAGICAL 2 and

# 魔法の国の魔弾

特 真 健

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Magical Girl in the  
Magical Land

# 魔法の国の魔弾

狩真健

真一 空

# Magic Bullet in Magic Land - WN Chapter 00-04

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# Briefing

At the back of a deserted mountain hut, a tattered book was enshrined onto a wooden desk that seemed like it would collapse soon. The cover was rolled up by the wind blowing from an opened door, and the pages were rolled up lightly.

With the wind dying, the pages stopped flipping as well. It was exactly at the last page which had one sentence written on it.

What was written there was this.

[My name is Watarai Karito. If you are able to read this, it means that I'm assuming that you are a person from my world, so I'm going to continue my story.

I came to this world on year 20XX Month X day XX. It was around half-past 8 PM in Japan's local time. At the very least, it was around that time when I last confirmed it.

My last memory before waking up to this place was selecting the mercenary mode of the VRMMO type military shooting game. I have no idea of the sequence of events on how I arrived in this place thereafter.

What I can only think of and imagine is that some problem had occurred on the administrator's part. Otherwise, it would be due to the fault that I tried to continue through the game with the unlimited goods and money settings. However, there were many players who have obtained the privilege of unlimited goods and money settings aside from myself, and I have never heard of players being harmed by the occurring bugs.

Anyway, even though I still can't believe it myself, I was forced to accept things when I realized that I had transformed into the appearance of my character at

the beginning of the game. When I looked at the mirror, I was surprised that my face, my body and my height were exactly the same as my character in the game. This appearance was much better than my real self though.

But, what surprised me more was, the world of <World Battle-Ground Online> that I've played so far... Aahh, it's so troublesome to write the full name each time, so from now on, let's go with the shortened name <WBGO>. Anyway, the world that I've played in so far was of a totally different setting from this world.

When <WBGO>'s world was set to be in a modern day war environment, I don't recall seeing winged animals like dragons appearing in the sky... No, actually, during special missions where sudden gene manipulation occurred, creating a setting of biological weapons such as Taionto or pseudo zoobies happened. The company got harshly criticized at that time.

[TL:I didn't have idea what that Taionto is but the other one is very obvious.]

I was surprised when I saw a dragon flying over my head for the first time. As a result of looking up all the time, I fell down from the cliff due to my dumbfounded state... That made me realize that this world is real. Well, it was mostly because of the pain, because when you were shot by a gun, or blown up by a grenade in <WBGO>, you will not feel pain.

At first, I didn't want to accept this reality and shut myself in this hut for a week. The following week ended up being spent on understanding the current situation. Thereafter, while trying to accomplish all the things that I could possibly do until recently, I continued to wait for someone to come to this hut. After performing trial and error, I understood that I could use every weapon and equipment that I possessed before in this world freely, not only appearance wise, but I am also able to exhibit those skills obtained in <WBGO>.

What about other players aside from me? No, it doesn't seem like there would be another human being from my world that would come here.

I stayed in this hut for a full year according to the Earth's calendar. If it wasn't for the clean well of spring water that I found located at the back of the hut, and

an unlimited supply of the recovery item, usable ration, I would have died of starvation a long time ago.

In my former world, I lived in solitude. In the real world, I left high school halfway after sending a gang of bullies into the hospital. At the same time, my parents passed away in an accident. Because of that, I slowly became a NEET and shut myself inside my apartment while living off of the money I got from my parents' insurance, and played games all day long. I didn't have any human relations except for those from the internet. I was drowning in solitude everyday.

I thought that was enough. I didn't know what true loneliness was.

It made me realize that I was naive.

I can't endure it anymore. I literally didn't meet anyone else here, didn't talk, and, how long has it been since I came into contact with other people? I came to realize how harsh this world was.

Therefore I decide to leave here.

I don't care who it is, I just want to see someone's face. I want to hear a person's voice. If this world really is a fantasy, then I wouldn't even mind if it's an elf, or a someone with cat ears or dog ears. Even a dragon that can speak will be fine too. As long as we can have mutual understanding of each other, even a specter would be gladly welcomed.

I can no longer stand this loneliness. It's already a miracle that I haven't gone crazy. Those castaways who drifted into an uninhabited island must have felt like this too.

To my countryman who has come to this world... I have headed north. Follow

the small path down the slope that I've opened, and take the left path to head north from there.

I pray for a comrade that can read these words to appear. If it really happens, I want you to not forget.

\_\_\_\_\_That you aren't alone. At the very least, it's because you have me, someone like you in this world.

I wish you good luck.]

How much have I walked?

I have been walking for three days and three nights. Except for eating and sleeping, I continued to walk even when the sky turned dark. From what my body tells me, it seems like I've walked about 100 km.

I almost didn't feel any physical fatigue. In the modern warfare MMORPG <WBGO> mercenary mode, you can acquire experience and raise the player's rank at the same time by clearing the quests and training. Also, it became a means of strengthening one's parameters through the allocation of points gained.

His physical abilities such as Life Point(LP), Muscle Strength, Stamina, Agility, and Reflexes were strengthened to the maximum. It wasn't an exaggeration to say that he was invincible. After all, it was only limited to the mercenary mode.

<WBGO>'s biggest realistic setting would lie in its pure implementation of the [Tactical Combat Mode], where battles among players occur. It's a system where battle reproductions were made as a gaudy performance, and the only difference from real combat was that nobody actually died from it.

Karito's tactical combat mode rank was above average. Amongst the numerous participating active military soldiers, he could be considered as one of the superior ones.

Still, the active military officers and players were fixed with minimum parameters, and special items and recovery items will not appear. This is the



realistic sense of urgency that the [Tactical Combat Mode] provides. For those players who purely want to enjoy the exhilarating gameplay, they would usually be inclined to choose the [Mercenary Mode].

Of course, in whichever mode, like any other MMO games, it's possible to enjoy it by teaming up with other players and dividing into opposing teams for player battles.

In addition, the present Karito was equipped with a special exoskeleton armour which only appears in mercenary mode. The armour can give various additional effects other than damage reduction when equipped. It was the so-called armour of magic in RPG games. But, it was not made by magic, but from technology. You could say that it's closer to a SF (Science Fiction) setting.

The rifle he was holding in his arms for self-protection weighed the same as a branch of dried wood.

Karito's current equipment was a rifle called [M14EBR](#). It was customized from the special forces' Springfield M14 automatic rifle which uses 7.62 mm caliber bullets.

In the game (and real world), it has high output power, and a fully automatic rapid-firing mechanism. It was a prideful, high performance all-round gun that can be used for accurate and long distance sniping. Although it was hard to handle due to its large recoil, with muscle strength that has been improved to max, and with the armor's additional effect (recoil absorption UP) in addition to Karito's skill, it is more than enough to demonstrate the full power of M14EBR without much adverse effects.

Benefitting from his maximum status and equipment that have been mastered, Karito's speed didn't even drop by a bit even though he had already been walking for three days and three nights.

But, he was reaching his limit in a different sense.

The road seemed to stretch on forever without end. He didn't see anyone on this road. He didn't meet a half-beast, which has the lower body of a beast and the upper body of a human, nor an elf, or cat eared or dog eared people either.

He, Wakari Karito, had not escaped from his loneliness yet.

As long as a person lives, no matter if he is walking, sleeping, or doing nothing at all, he will go hungry.

As Karito became hungry, he sat down under the shade of a tree, and selected military rations from the list of items. Two plastic packs appeared out of nowhere, and landed onto his hand.

The contents were cooked rice and hamburger steak. Each meal was attached with a heating agent to warm it, and a spork.

In <WBGO>, military rations were treated as recovery items, but in reality, the actual rations that each country adopted came in a wide variety.

It became interesting when a foreign player gets used to rations other than those their home country adopts, while on the other hand, one would receive a special privilege after collecting various countries' rations. By now, Karito had finished collecting the rations of the countries that had been added recently.

...I never thought that these rations would become my lifeline now that I have been sent to a different world.

After sampling and comparing the rations from various countries for a year, as expected, since I am Japanese, the rations from Japan (a reproduction of the military rations from JSDF) suit me the best.

The military rations that could only be a simple consumable item, even if it was a set menu, since the beginning of the game, have now become my important meals after I was transferred to this world. It sure is ironic.

Now, let's get back to the topic.

(Next, should I change into the French military uniform..?) I wondered.

I was lucky that there was a PDA (Portable Terminal) in my breast pocket. I selected the item inside the item box, and changed into the equipment.

A PDA is an important item in <WBGO> that's given to players at the beginning of the game.

Whatever happens, it won't break or become lost. All I need to do is to imagine it, and then I can take it out or put it away anywhere I want. I can put it away into my back pocket, and in the next moment, I can take it out from my breast

pocket. Such tricks are possible.

With the PDA, we can store items, change equipments, record conversations with friends, display a map, assist in the provision of expenditure money, and various actions that can let you play the game more comfortably. But, after coming to this world, only the item storage and equipment change functions were useable.

The weight of the equipment a player can equip is predetermined. It is impossible to equip equipment with a weight that's over the limit. The only ways to get around the limitation of equippable weight itself was a training mission to be cleared for strengthening physical strength, or to rely on armours with additional effects to boost the physical limitations. Furthermore, the armours themselves aren't included in the list of equipments.

The maximum reinforcement a player can equip is 100 kg. As long as it doesn't exceed that, Karito can easily carry any huge objects.

The difference between the equipment list and the item box is that any equipment stored inside the equipment list could be equipped instantly just by imagining it, but there is a limit to how much it can store. As for the item box, even though it can store an unlimited amount of items, on the contrary, one would have to perform the action of selecting the items from the PDA. That's about all of it, I think.

I take out my PDA and choose an item, and allowed it to process my command.

"...Shit." I crushed an empty tin can lying near my foot irritatedly.

I had waited for someone to appear while shutting myself in that mountain hut for a year, and when I finally decided to come out from my hut to travel the world...

Only three days, three days. It hit Karito that positive results do not always follow after the actions done.

Even if you have a well-trained body, it doesn't mean you have mental strength proportionate to that robust body.

(Maybe I shouldn't have left the mountain hut after all?) I sighed.

Even if I regret it now, it's already too late. I have come too far already. I do not feel like tracing back the path that I took before any longer. I had no choice but to move forward.

*Gasa*

"Huh!!!?" Karito exclaimed.

Karito stood up immediately after hearing the sound of vegetation being trod on by something, and held his M14EBR reflexively.

In fact, when he was still staying in the hut, he had experienced a similar situation where he was attacked by a bear-like monster while investigating the vicinity. Even though at the first glance it looked like a bear, but it also had similarities with wolves, and it also has a horn like a deer's. As expected, it was a strange animal from fantasy.

Soon after encountering it, out of surprise and fear, I unconsciously summoned an [AA-12 automatic shotgun](#) and a drum of magazine loaded with double buckshot shells (About 32 rounds x 1 double buckshot shell, with 9 lead = 288 lead buckshot), and fired at it, turning the monster into a state more hideous than mince meat. Incidentally, due to the grotesque scene of intestinal guts and the blood's intense smell, I puked.

[TL: So yeah I didn't understand much about that stuff but after asking google-san I get something like this 1 drum of magazine can load 32 rounds of buckshot shell, and inside a buckshot shell it contain 9 lead bullet. So when you fired 1 buckshot it will spread that 9 bullet out from the shell and I guess the MC emptied the magazine so he shoot a total 288 lead bullet.]

Anyway, after experiencing something like that, I have learnt my lesson. Karito activated the goggles' function on, and assumed a position where he could shoot with the M14EBR anytime. If, by any chance, the other party is a human, it wouldn't be something to be made light of .

At a glance, the goggles looked like it was designed for military use, and had a thick frame, but in fact, this was a special pair of goggles that was granted only after you cleared a certain mission and was promoted to certain rank. The goggles can be used as a telescope, infrared goggles, and night vision goggles. It can also be used to see through something and search for enemies with high

efficiency.

Upon reading Karito's thoughts, the goggles activated the scan mode. Within a radius of 15 metres, he was able to see through a thin wall, and see a silhouette on the other side. Within the field of vision, at the distance of 15 metres, the scenery beyond the thin wall would be projected as silhouettes. Compared to the real scene, the transparent silhouette was reflected with little deviation as it overlapped with the visual field.

"What is that?"

He saw a shadow move just a moment ago. Because the object had immediately disappeared from the effective range of the scan, he wasn't able to confirm the identity of the object. It was somehow beast-like, yet also somehow human-like.

"At least there were animal ears and a tail, right?" He asked himself.

At any rate, it was certainly very agile. It had disappeared into the depths of the forest in an instant. If I was attacked by such an opponent...

"In any case, I will switch to scout radar." He muttered.

He decided to switch on said function. By sensing the enemy's heartbeat, their position would be displayed on the goggles. The searching range was about 15 metres too.

I looked up to the sky. At a distance, a bird was circling at high altitude. If only I could fly like a bird, then I would immediately be able to find a town or a village where people might live.

"If I have an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) I should be able to use it to check... Huh?" Karito mumbled.

At the edge of his vision, he saw something besides the bird and the clouds. He strained his eyes. Both of Karito's eyes were opened to their limits when he saw the real nature of that thing.

It was smoke. Blocked by the forest, he didn't know where or why it occurred.

But, there would be no smoke without fire. The possibility that the forest burning on its own was low.

The smoke continued rising steadily.

“There might be a person there...” For a moment, he groaned, flooded with emotions. “A person, there is a person there..!!!!”

Without a second thought, Karito began to run.

With his physical ability strengthened to maximum, and the addition of the exoskeleton armour that strengthened his muscle power, his speed had easily surpassed the 100m run world record.

“I can meet a person, I can meet a person, I can meet a PERSON.....!!!!” He yelled.

Stimulated by hope, Karito failed to notice something as he desperately ran towards the site.

Soon after he started running, another two or three columns of smoke rose from beyond the forest, adding to the darkness that was polluting the sky.

Without realizing anything until he arrived at the scene, the young man with raven hair who was seized by loneliness continued to rush ahead recklessly.

## 001 - First Encounter

Without slowing down his full sprint dash, Karito continued until the scenery changed into a single path sandwiched between forests. There, he finally stopped in his tracks.

Or, it should be said that he couldn't help but stop.

Washing away the very glimmer of hope that moved Karito's running muscles, the shocking sight spread out before him made him dumbfounded. It couldn't be helped.

A village-like settlement was wrapped in flames.

The reason why he knew that it wasn't an accidental fire was because of the intense smell of iron rust and gore that was carried by the wind to Karito's nose.

It was exactly like that time when even a shotgun couldn't smash the horned bear in its original form. He couldn't help but recognize the similar states.

Above all, the houses that were burning were all constructed from wood and plaster. Surrounding the vicinity were figures of people crouching and lying down on the ground, their bodies dyed with fresh blood flowing from various wounds, most notably from arrows penetrating their bodies.

Amidst were shapes beyond recognition, people who became chunks of flesh, with bones and internal organs scattered on the ground. A great portion of the ground's surface had turned reddish-black from all the blood that was soaked up.

It didn't seem like they died because of the suffocating smoke. No matter how much I think about it, they were all beasts, or possibly even artificially made bodies.

It was an odd scene, strange enough that it didn't make Karito vomit out all the food that he had just eaten a few minutes ago.

"...Huh...!!" Karito gasped.

To his own surprise, when he stumbled upon the scene of the massacre, he rolled over to the thicket beside him for cover in reflex.

This slaughterfest was clearly done by a third party. Despite it being a fantasy world, Karito didn't think that there exists a beast that can use a bow and arrows.

He laid his M14EBR onto the two legged pod, and assumed a snipping posture. This was the movement that he had performed countless times inside the game. But, this was obviously reality - the stench of death assaulting his nose, his heart beating like an alarm bell, knocking loudly into his thoughts.

Without using the scope that was attached onto the top of his rifle, Karito activated the zooming function of his special goggles. It was much easier to confirm the situation by having a vast field of vision.

I focused on the piles of damaged human bodies while clenching my teeth. I checked them one by one for survivors, even for those that seemed to still be breathing slightly from the distance. But, I couldn't even find one survivor at all.

I checked once again, but the results didn't change. I was attacked by an indescribable feeling of impermanence. Have the people who did this already left this place...?

The enlarged field of vision of the goggles showed the detailed state of the dead bodies to Karito. Every person's face was contorted in anguish, their eyes and mouths wide open from rigor mortis. Without any regard of it being shown through the scope, the vividness of death struck Karito's conscience.

Their expressions upon death were so intense that looking at a scene of human bodies that were scattered around from an explosion would be better.

When I finally couldn't endure it any longer, the taste of sour gastric juice spreads in my mouth. I forcibly swallowed it, and pushed the contents back into my stomach.

I felt that the state of the corpses that were lying all over the place looked different from normal, leaving aside the question of how does a normal corpse look like, but it was too late when I noticed this.

(Animal ears? Was this a village of beastmen?)



Shifting my attention away from the way they died, I confirmed the general state of their bodies once more. I noticed that half of them had something on both sides of their heads, of which resembled cat, dog or cow ears. Also, the region between their waists and bottoms had a tail growing out from there.

Even though there were a few childrens' corpses mixed in there, most of them were the grown bodies of males and females with animal ears and tails. The remaining half were the corpses of ordinary humans.

Whatever the state was, the fact didn't change that all of the men and women, old and young, all who lived in this village were massacred.

So, the reality was obvious.

———If only I had arrived earlier, would I have been able to change anything?

At that time, the shadow of a person jumped out from the back of a burning house. I shifted my focus to the shadow of the figure quickly.

"A girl?" I muttered.

She looked to be about ten years old. Wearing a plain apron dress with conspicuous patchwork, the girl looked desperate.

Karito looked over to the figure that was frantically crossing his field of vision.

But as soon as I thought that there was something flashing for an instant, the girl came tumbling down.

No, something was different. She was shot by an arrow from her back. The arrow pierced deep into her thigh, and a look of anguish appeared on her face.

After a short while, several men appeared from the corner of a building. To be exact, there were five people. One man wore a pure white robe just like the typical guise of a magician from fantasies. The other four soldiers were dressed similarly in light equipment, strapped with longswords and bows. Looking at the soldiers' vulgar smiles, it made Karito remember the bullies from his high school days.

All of the swords in their hands were stained with blood. The soldier-like group

appeared to have worn a set of uniformed equipments, as everyone had a metal slip-guard protecting their torso of the same design.

The magician also had hair as white as his robes. Not just his appearance, but his body seemed to be surrounded by a white faint glow, a mist, or perhaps a halo of some sort. I wonder if that was just my imagination?

“Ya, just when I thought I was able to secure a living female! Isn’t this a kid!” One of them complained.

“Hey, don’t ask for too much. It can’t be helped since we got carried away and slaughtered all of them.” Another replied.

“Urgh... Ah...” The little girl crawled and cringed in an attempt to escape from the men, even if it’s just by a little bit.

However, on that girl’s back, a soldier’s armoured boot stopped her. A groan of pain leaked out from her mouth.

Karito wasn’t able to hear their conversation from his position. But, with the aid of an interception mic, it would have been possible to pick up even their breaths. However, at this moment, Karito was frozen to the spot while holding his breath, forgetting the existence of the equipment.

“Now now, let’s hurry up and bring her back to the carriage. Everyone is waiting as well.” One of them said placatingly.

“What should we do, Rezado-sama...?” Someone asked.

“This idiot! How can you speak so brazenly?! I am sorry, Rezado-sama. Because he is just a new recruit, he doesn’t know how amazing Rezado-sama is yet.” An older man apologised.

“Don’t mind it. After all, we are all the same. Even though it was a little bit unsatisfying, I have enjoyed the beast hunt. You can do as you like with the female beasts.” Rezado waved his hand.

“As expected of Rezado-sama! You are very wise!” They exclaimed.

Am I simply going to stand there and watch them drag away the injured little girl ?

However, the opposite party is the same as him - humans. They were the very human beings that he had always longed to meet, longed dearly to meet. At the very least, that should have been the case.

[ED: Oi, oi, MC! Be brave and kill them for once! Didn't you kill a horned bear?! Shouldn't human trash like this be killed too?]

However, if only this meeting was a more peaceful one... For example, a situation where they were farmers quietly ploughing their plantations. Karito would have been running towards them wholeheartedly, crying in delight.

[ED: You'll probably scare them and be treated as an intruder though...]

Unfortunately, the people reflected in Karito's eyes were a group of madmen who massacre living beings, be they old or young, men or women, beastmen or ordinary humans.

———Who in their right mind would expose themselves to a group of such people?

"Y.O.U GUYSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" A loud roar suddenly came out from the rear.

[ED: This one, apparently. Also, *insert butthole joke here*]

Just a moment later, the shadow of a figure flew over from the side where Karito lay hidden.

It had tremendous speed. Its dashing speed was like when one was equipped with an armor that reinforces speed, and putting all the experience they gained into the speed parameters. To be exact, it was at a speed of leaping over a distance of fifty meters within a mere five seconds to reach the area where the group of people stood.

The figure jumped over to the group and raised his right fist. The lifted fist was covered in light.

Like a killer technique from an anime; Karito had this inappropriate impression.

Returning the intruder's attack motion, the white robed man reacted first

before the other soldiers could even move. As if protecting the group of men behind, he stepped forward in front of them. The action taken by this magician-like robed man was only that.

The glowing fist pierced the white robed man... Or so I thought. At least, it was what it looked like to Karito.

But, the fist didn't reach its target. The white robed man stood on his feet as if nothing happened.

The fist did not make a blow on the white robed man's body, but hit the aura around him instead.

"...Looks like there is still a beast remaining." Rezado stated coldly.

"Gu, Gaaaaaa!!?" The figure that leaped for the strike was blown backwards.

As though a demolition iron ball had collided with it, the sound of the impact reverberated several times as it bounced on the ground, finally rolling a good ten metres away.

Ten seconds haven't even passed from the time the figure jumped from Karito's side .

When at last, the figure that had been blown off to the ground wasn't moving, I was able to see the full figure of the mystery person clearly.

The real nature of the figure was a beastwoman. Ignoring the point that she had not been groomed well, she still had dazzling blonde hair that extended to her shoulders, and unexpectedly, a pair of identical dog ears of the same hair color peeked out. In addition, a slender yet splendid tail sprung out from her waist.

I felt like I recognized this silhouette. Could it be, the shadow of the person I saw for an instant when I was having a meal?

Her well endowed chest and hips were covered atrociously, only by a piece of poor, torn up cloth wrapped around it. Her masculine beauty, that seemed to be of a concentrated mix of sharpness and wilderness, was distorted in pain from

the heavy blow that struck her whole body.

“Let go... Of that child...!” She grunted.

“It’s wonderful, Rezado-sama! As expected of the power of the god fragment!” One of the men panted.

“I am tired of hearing this foolish flattery. Do whatever you want with this beast too.” The robed man stated.

“Hehehe, I thought I had to make do with the kid, but it looks like I can make a profit out of this fellow here.” A man grinned.

All at once, the eyes of the group of men turned towards the beastwoman, glittering and smeared with lust worse than any wild animal around.

[ED: Umm, isn’t this where the MC usually steps in?]

One of the men stomped onto the back of the little girl, and asked his friends.

“What should we do with this kid?”

“We have already acquired such a fine article, so that one isn’t necessary anymore. After all, a bitch that is worthy of being violated has already come out by herself.” One replied.

“That is right. I don’t have the hobby of doing it with a child either———” Another smiled.

The soldier who was stomping on the little girl’s back pulled out his longsword from his waist.

‘Stop’, Karito’s mouth moved unconsciously, and the beastwoman also cried out ‘Stop!’ in sorrow.

[ED: DO SOMETHING MC! WHAT’S YOUR RIFLE FOR?!]

But, it was all for nothing. The soldier’s longsword thrust into the back of the girl without hesitation.

“RIIIIIIIINNAAAAAAAA!!!!” The woman screamed.

She tried to move towards the little girl, sluggish because of the pain. Before she could reach the little girl’s side, the group of men had already pressed her against the ground.

The longsword pierced the girl's stomach, and physically nailed her to the ground. Fresh blood soaked the ground and spread out slowly as it oozed from the body. The man twisted his hand that was gripping onto the longsword, making the girl shriek hoarsely at the pain of the blade digging into her torso as she gasped constantly.

Karito had been watching all of this from the beginning till the end through his goggles. At the thicket where he lay hidden, Karito had witnessed everything - each and every move of the soldier who stabbed the little girl, the expression of that very soldier at the moment of the murder.

(That man... He was laughing)

The moment he understood the meaning of it, something changed inside of Karito.

...I thought that it would be enough as long as I can meet a person. I surely did think so.

(Don't joke with me. They are crazy!)

I didn't want to admit the existence that would stab a young girl with a sword while laughing as a human being. I wouldn't consider them as one.

They were no longer human, but an existence of the worst evil, worse than a starved beast.

And, Karito possessed a way to eliminate them.

[ED: Finally!]

While saying so, was there a reason to not beat this bastard down to hell?

He stretched his hand to the side of his rifle that sat on the two-legged stand, and switched to an [orthodox](#) shooting position.

He held his breath after breathing out silently, letting his whole body relax. After his whole body's muscles loosened up, he fixed his muscles into that position, suppressing any slight movement that could alter his aim to the maximum.

First, I aimed at the man in the white robe. He was probably a magician of some sort. Since there's a good chance that he could cast some powerful magic

here, I need to eliminate him first. It is basic strategy to eliminate an opponent that has larger firepower, like a gunman with a machine gun. I aimed the [crosshair](#) at the magician's head.

The robed magician flashed a sadistic smile as he looked at the girl writhing in agony at being pierced through by the sword. His face overlapped with the face of the bullies' leader who used to make Karito eat feces by force. Right after that, Karito flung a urinal pot to the lead bully's face, and literally crushed the bridge of his nose.

But this time, it would be destroying the head of a good-for-nothing with a lead bullet. As for the actions that he would undertake from then on, there was no hesitation, logical sense, or sense of guilt in the slightest in Karito's mind.

"Die, you fucking asshole." At the same time as he murmured the phrase in anger, he squeezed the trigger of the rifle quietly.

The recoil that penetrated his shoulder; the sound of a gunshot roaring... The magnified head of the magician exploded. As long as I took on a proper sniping posture, I didn't even need the assistance of the mark at a distance of no more than fifty metres. It was to the extent where I didn't even need the assistance of the scope.

In addition to being supported by the bipedal stand, Karito's M14EBR also uses a forehand grip and a high precision gun barrel that could increase accuracy for a short distance confrontation. Along with it was also Karito's own specially custom made enhanced armour exploding ammunition with high firepower and recoil. Inside the game, it was just a simple customization, but it was enough. With the correct handling method, it could be used to cope with any kind of situation.

I fixed my aim that has been tilted. I shot another two bullets into the chest of the standing body that has not realized it was missing its head to ensure that I made the finishing blow.

They blasted somewhere near the heart. As Karito had only ever seen the image of blood splattering inside the game, the sight of a freshly and badly damaged corpse was imprinted into his memories. Karito suppressed the strange feeling into a corner of his mind forcefully.

I moved the direction of my muzzle by a little bit, and the next target that my rifle's crosshair pointed to was the man, who has been kicking the girl, who was standing stunned, unable to comprehend what had just happened.

I aimed at his neck joint that wasn't covered by the slip-guard, and shot. After shooting open a large hole in his body, the man collapsed.

I have murdered two people today.

"Serves you right." My lips moved unconsciously.

Furthermore, I turned and readied my aim at the remaining men who surrounded the beastwoman.

On this side too, the group of men froze at their respective spots, unable to grasp the situation. Without any further hesitation, I shot another bullet. Bit by bit, I shifted my aim and mowed them down with rapid fire in semi-auto mode. The armor exploding bullets pierced their armours easily, destroying their internal organs. They fell down one after another, scattering pieces of flesh and blood from the pierced openings.

When Karito had killed all of the enemies in his sight, he raised his body quickly and attempted to approach the village. As he pressed his rifle onto his right shoulder, he dropped his waist a little bit, tilted his body forward, and began to jog. Even so, his speed was the same as a child running a short distance.

[TLC:Is his speed really freaking slow - -"]

[ED: Wary of danger, maybe? IDK.]

Karito was only a few meters away from the beastwoman that lay dumbfounded, also unable to comprehend the scene that had just occurred, when at that moment, another group of soldiers came running towards them.

Their hands were holding onto swords. It was very clear that they belonged to the group of men Karito had just killed from their malicious presence. Their numbers totalled to five. If they were the men's comrades, it means that they're Karito's enemies.

"What the hell are you..." Ignoring the fact that one of the men was about to say something, Karito proceed to fire.



When aiming at a moving target, one should aim for the large torso. At this short distance, Karito didn't even need to use the scope. He double tapped the trigger, and the bullet hit the middle of the man's chest exactly.

[TL: Double Tap is a shooting technique where 2 shots are fired in rapid succession at the same target]

Subsequently, at the point where only two men remained, the M14EBR ran out of bullets. He imagined a weapon change as he slung the rifle to his back without panicking or fussing, his hands unconsciously moving towards the back of his waist.

When both of his hands appeared next, he was holding onto two handguns, one each in his hands.

They were the IMI desert eagle. Moreover, they were the best ones in their class, a .50AE model. The .05AE model has an expansion magazine that can increase the capacity of bullets loaded in it, a high precision barrel that increases accuracy, a muzzle brake that reduces recoil, and an armor piercing shell with increased recoil of customizable performance.

[TL: I found a [video](#) of swat team firing a desert eagle but it was .44 one damn it really packed a punch in there.]

Originally, this setting was unachievable in the [Tactical Combat Mode], but it was not unusual for a player in mercenary mode to use two handguns, considering that there was the transfiguration of parameters, and the armours' additional effects.

It was, then again, different from the M14EBR, where its heavy gunfire sound rung out like a hammer slamming onto a tree. A huge handgun comes with a huge muzzle flash as well, and the magnum bullets show the power it deserves. The soldier's upper body leaned backwards and collapsed, as if he was hit by a home run king's invisible bat.

The last soldier was filled with horror as he watched his friends die one after another.

"HIIIIIIIIII!" He emitted a miserable scream.

Throwing away his sword, which was the only weapon protecting him, he

turned his back to Karito, and ran away.

But, Karito didn't intend to let him go.

Aren't you as guilty as well? The traces of blood left on his sword were the best evidence.

"This insect is too selfish." Karito mumbled.

He raised the desert eagle in his right hand single-handedly, and fired at the escaping soldier. A hole the size of a table tennis ball formed in his back. Leaning forward, the soldier fell face first. There was no sign of him waking up. There was no sign of life in him as well.

I scanned the whole area while taking a pose where I can shoot with a desert eagle anytime. There doesn't seem to be any ambushing troops within the scan range.

The only people alive were Karito, the beastwoman, and one other person.

"No, don't, Rina! You musn't die! Stay with me!" The beastwoman finally pulled herself together, and clung onto the little girl.

She pulled out the longsword from her little body, and embraced her. She suppressed the intense bleeding from her stomach, but no matter how you looked at it, it was a fatal wound.

Rina seemed to be the name of that little girl. Karito then noticed that he was able to understand the words that the beastwoman said. It might be because of the effect of the standardized translation function inside .

Unable to leave them alone, he approached the mortally injured girl called Rina, wondering if he could offer any first aid. Then, he did a double take.

Her eyes had already lost their glimmer, and her face was turning greenish-blue from the loss of blood. On top of her head was a floating clock shaped icon.

[TL: NANI!]

To the players of , it was a familiar icon. It was the pie chart that indicates the time one has remaining, and it would gradually decrease over time. He shouldn't delay things any longer.

“Get out of the way!” He yelled urgently.

“Wha... What are you gonna do!?” The woman glared.

“Listen up, I will take a look at this child!” He stated fiercely.

He tore the girl from the beastwoman by force, and kneeled beside Rina while choosing from the equipment list.

Since time was precious at the moment, he didn’t give an explanation. Once Karito found the item he wanted, he materialized it immediately.

What appeared was a pencil-shaped syringe replacing his handgun. Karito pressed the sharp point at the back of her neck, and pushed the button on the opposite side with his thumb. *Pssh* The sound of compressed air could be heard, and the medical solution flowed into the girl’s body.

It was now Karito’s turn to be pushed away by the beastwoman. His collar was grabbed and raised with a strength that he couldn’t imagine coming from the beastwoman’s small hand. Her eyes blazed with fury as she glared at Karito angrily.

“What did you do to Rina?!” She demanded.

“Medicine, I only injected her with medicine!” Karito replied hastily.

Right after that, the girl’s eyes that were closed the entire time fluttered open. While making questioning sounds, she raised her body easily. Her face’s complexion had returned.

Understanding that it turned out well, Karito’s stiff body slouched in relief. On the other hand, the beastwoman froze again from surprise when she saw that Rina, who had been on the verge of dying moments ago, had regained her health. However, her hand was still gripping onto Karito’s collar.

“Eh? H-Huh? I don’t feel anymore pain?” Rina stated in confusion.

“Ri-Riina!? Why!? A... A-Are you really alright!?” The beastwoman yelped.

“Y-Yes. I don’t understand it well, but I’m probably fine. ...I think.” The girl replied hesitantly.

“Hey, hey, hey! Hey you! What exactly have you done to Rina!” The

beastwoman turned to Karito agitatedly.

“I gave her some resurrection medicine. It was nearly past the time limit, but looks like I made it in time somehow...” Karito sighed.

[TL: giving resurrection medicine like a boss.]

The stopwatch icon that floated on top of the girl’s head indicated the time limit until the resurrection medicine given would have an effect. Resurrection medicine was an item that would immediately revive the player when his Life Point reaches zero, with the exception of instant death or damage dealt to a certain level in a given period of time. It was an indispensable existence when you play.

Anyway, the beastwoman’s tears of gratitude kept flowing out from the joy of Rina reviving from the brink of death.

While rubbing her red-hot swollen eyes, the beastwoman turned to face Karito while securing the girl in her arms several minutes later.

“I give my thanks to you from the bottom of my heart for saving Rina... By the way, who are you?”

Now then, how should I answer this?

Karito didn’t know how to reply.

## 002 - Straight Story

In the end, their self-introductions were done along the way as they left the annihilated village since there was no guarantee that the comrades of those soldiers wouldn't come rushing back if they had stayed in that place.

Even though the beastwoman terribly regretted abandoning the village as well as the corpses of the villagers whom she had spent all her life together with, when Karito explained that the cohorts of the soldiers whom he had slaughtered might come looking for their group members who haven't returned, she immediately agreed.

The girl, who was called Rina by the beastwoman, was being carried on her back. Even after she had recovered from the abdominal injury with the help of the revival medicine, she was still exhausted physically and mentally from witnessing the people who were close to her being massacred right in front of her eyes. In addition, she, herself, was almost killed too. This experience was simply too cruel for a girl this young.

"I haven't given my name to the savior of my younger sister yet, have I? I'm Reona. Please treat me well." The beastwoman named Reona skillfully switched the hand which was supporting Rina, who was sleeping at her back to her left hand, and held out her right hand to Karito, who was walking on her right side.

There were several saddled horses tied to the fences along the village that looked like they belong to the soldiers. However, Reona seemed to have no experience in horseriding, needless to mention Karito. Presently, they were walking along a highway, opposite from the direction that Karito had come from.

Karito removed his thick gloves in a hurry, and grasped Reona's right hand tightly with a trembling hand. Reona's hand was a little rough from all the outside activities, yet it was still slender enough as a woman's hand... Above all, it was warm.

It wasn't a dream or a hallucination; it was the feeling of a genuine human's skin.

As I shook hands and talked with her like this, I'm certain that this was reality.

When I had realised that, the corners of my eyes, and my nose turned hot immediately.

“Wait, why are you bursting into tears all of sudden?!” Reona exclaimed.

“So-Sorry, but it has been a really long time since I’ve come into contact with someone else like this... Urgh...” Karito sniffled.

“I never thought that you’d be someone who was easily moved to tears like this...” The beastwoman snorted.

When looking at Karito’s current figure; first of all, while he has a large build, his muscles had tightened up his whole body. His body that looked lean at a glance was actually quite muscular, and the reinforced armor with a forest camouflage pattern covered his body like a space suit used for outer space work. Except for his right hand, for which he had just taken off his glove, the only exposed part of his body was only his neck and above.

His overall face was somewhat sharp, with short black hair. His hair and eyes were black, typical racial characteristics of the Japanese. Karito’s face was nicely arranged in its own way, although seven out of ten people would have the impression that he looked unsociable. At a glance, he had features that made it hard for others to approach him.

In reality, Karito’s face and stature back on earth was quite dull. However, inside the game, it was natural to change one’s appearance to one’s liking. Hence, this figure was the real Karito now, so he had no choice but to accept it.

At first he felt uncomfortable with the appearance of his avatar in the game that became his very own self, but, after spending a year with this body, he had become used to it despite his dislike.

Humans are quick to adapt after all.

“In the first place, it has been several years since I’ve held a girl’s hand after all...” Karito mumbled.

[ED: Creepy .\_.]

“Ah, I would be grateful if you could release my hand soon? It is quite difficult to carry her with one hand.” Reona said.

“Uoh! So-Sorry! But, you shouldn’t strain yourself too much. After all, you are still injured by the blow before. It is okay to let me carry the child.” Karito offered.

Remembering the scene where she was blown to the ground in a way flashier than a Kung Fu movie, Karito called out to her, worried about Reona from the bottom of his heart.

“You don’t need to worry about it. I can’t make my benefactor do such a thing, and Rina is my younger sister after all.” Reona waved it off.

“Is that so... My name is Watarai Karito. Please treat me kindly too.” The man stated.

“Watarai Karito? What a strange name.” The beastwoman commented.

“Ah, more or less... Watarai is my surname, and Karito is my given name.” He explained.

“Ah, so it’s like that. But, it’s quite unusual around this area. Although, I’ve heard that humans with surnames live in the imperial capital, or in the surrounding regions nearby. Did Karito come from around there?” Reona asked.

“No, it wasn’t like that. In the first place, I don’t even know anything about this world at all.” Karito sighed.

“...It seems like there are a lot of complicated circumstances.” Reona replied.

“Exactly. It was extremely confusing, or I should say everything was lacking in information? I wasn’t even sure why I was here in the first place. I was simply in the dark.” Karito explained.

“Well, don’t worry about the details. Besides, it will not change the fact that Karito is Rina’s and my benefactor.” The beastwoman huffed.

“Well, I’m saved. To be frank, I don’t know how to begin explaining it... However, are you really okay? You’ve just experienced something like that, so don’t force yourself. If you like, you can depend on me.” The man stated.

“...Thank you. Unlike your face, you’re actually very kind.” Reona smiled.

Unbefitting of my face, huh. Karito revealed a bitter smile, remembering his own face back on earth.

“It’s not like that. I only wanted an opportunity to talk as much as possible. Because I have always been alone until now... It’s amazing to think that it’s fun to just talk like this for the first time.” He stopped talking, and stared at Rina’s sleeping face leaning against her elder sister’s back alternately. “Family... I can understand the feeling someone important being robbed as well.”

“Is Karito’s family also..?” The beastwoman asked hesitantly.

“It was an accident. They had a frontal collision with a car driven by a drunkard. It’s a common story. Furthermore, the other driver also died together with them, so I couldn’t even have my revenge.”

Ever since the bloodbath with the bullies, the sadness of losing his parents swelled up in his stomach. On top of losing the object of his revenge, the fury of losing his destination might have been the reason for Karito to spontaneously fight back against those people in the act of persecuting himself in the process, or so Karito analysed.

At that point, a slight discrepancy of understanding was born between Karito and Reona. What Reona had in mind as a car was a horse-drawn carriage, and that a frontal crash of two carriages seemed unreal. Reona puzzled over Karito’s words, only catching the outline of the matter through the nuance of the conversation so far.

In other words, this youth who was her benefactor had lost someone important to him in unreasonable ways too.

“You have your own hardships too, huh...” Reona sighed.

“It’s a story that happens all the time. In fact, this kind of story was all over the place... But, is your body really alright? You have been attacked by such force that it wouldn’t be strange to die if you were reckless...” I knew it was impolite, but I scanned Reona’s body from the top to the bottom.

There were scratches here and there, but it is such a wonder that there are no serious wounds like bruises or bone fractures in sight.

“Of course! No matter what, I am of the Garm tribe, a proud daughter of Fenrir! Before, I wasn’t able to move for a little bit when I completely received the strike, but our body isn’t weak like a human’s.”



Garm means hunting hound, and that Fenrir is from the Norse mythology? Karito searched out the relevant articles from the sea of material that he had gathered widely from the net.

Reona stuck out her chest proudly while carrying her little sister. Her breasts, which were only wrapped with a piece of frayed, ragged cloth, shook a little.

Counting off the Karito who spends 70% of his life one-sidedly as a shut-in, and the fact that a few moments ago, he had just planned and executed the killing of a few people, Karito is an extremely healthy young man. He was unable to tear his eyes away from the voluptuous swelling which shakes with even the slightest movement once he set his eyes on it.

Looking from close proximity, it is clear that the ragged cloth couldn't completely cover her breasts. It only covered the top half of those rocket shaped swellings, whereas the bottom half was left exposed to the outside air and Karito's sight, revealing healthily tanned wheat-coloured skin.

Her lower body was wrapped with a similar ragged cloth too. The gray colored cloth didn't have enough width, and only covered till the joint of her thigh and the root of her golden tail. Whenever she took a step, the most important triangle zone almost peeped out frequently. Karito's line of sight too, frequently went there. It was certainly a region of fascinating allure.

And because he was formerly a bullied child, for Karito who didn't even experience a proper conversation with a female classmate, he didn't have the skills to enjoy the body of a beautiful girl with his eyes without being noticed by the other party .

[ED: Creepy .\_.]

(This... If I leaned back a little bit, I can absolutely see the completely exposed bum from the back... Rather, the underside of her breasts are unbelievable. They don't hang down at all, and the tip points up proudly. It's the first time I've seen something like this other than inside an eroge. What on earth is packed inside that?)

“Despite your curt face, you are unexpectedly easy to understand. Your eyes are becoming bloodshot.” Reona said, amused.

“Yes!” Karito yelled, embarrassed.

( ° ∇ ° )o≧°Breasts ! ( ° ∇ ° )o≧°Breasts ! Her breasts, buttocks and thighs! Karito was desperately trying to keep himself from cheering from the bottom of his heart, but it seemed that it was pretty obvious from the point of view of the side who was being stared at.

With regards to the frozen Karito, Reona, who had made the opposite gender embarrassed from their own passionate stare, did not attempt to slap him, nor did she shake from agitation. Instead, she smiled and prodded him with her elbow jokingly.

“Rest assured that I have always been stared at like that, and it’s my nature for it to not feel bad at being stared this way. Because from the perspective of the males around me, it would mean that I am an excellent woman. In fact, it feels like something I can be proud of.”

“Isn’t this a premeditated crime! Is there no better decent clothing out there!? To be honest, with common sense, that style of appearance is too much of a temptation to the eyes!” Karito yelled.

“Eh, I like it this way since it’s easy to move in. Plus, it’s a tradition of the Garm tribe to celebrate the [Moonlight Night ceremony] where men and women dress alike. By the way, what do you mean by [common sense]?” Reona asked.

[TLC:the author is trying to say that Reona is asking Karito the meaning of common sense. It seems such words didn't exist in Garm tribe]

With the level of this civilization, it can’t be helped... No, it isn’t something that can’t be helped, but let’s just say that I could understand it.

“By the way, what is this [Moonlight Night Ceremony]?” Karito questioned.

“In the Gram tribe, when we reach 12 years old, on the first night of the full moon, our on other set of ears and tail that are the characteristic of the tribe, as well as our bodies, will grow quickly. We name such a day as the [Moonlight Night Ceremony]. If the tail and ears have grown safely, then that person will be

treated the same as an adult from that day on.” The beastwoman explained.

“Hm? Is the reason why the animal ears and tails hasn’t grown on Rina because she isn’t 12 years old yet?” Karito asked.

“That is right. She is 11 years old this year.” Reona nodded.

[TL: wait, did you mean by another year our loli will become a busty onee-chan? \*cheers]

“I see, so if she reaches 12 years old, she will have a nice body and animal ears huh...” He looked at Reona’s figure once again.

He was looking forward to it. He was unusually looking forward to the future!

[ED: Creep .\_. Ultra creepy.]

“I will say it first. Even though you are our benefactor, I will not let you make a move on Rina!” Reona glared at him.

“Sorry, I will restrain myself.” Karito apologised immediately.

“You really are a strange fellow.” She stared at me strangely.

Taking into account my behaviour, just as what Reona had said... Being rather bipolar, no, am I really kind of emotionally unstable?

“Sorry, I was too happy to have someone to talk to that I got too excited...” Karito sighed.

I calmed myself down. I took a deep breath while looking at the items list, choosing a plastic bottle of mineral water (Effect : small stamina recovery), and thought to cool my head with it.

On other hand, Reona opened her eyes wide as she looked at the bottle-like container that appeared out of nowhere suddenly.

[TL: From here on it was Reona POV]

(He has an iron stick that I’ve never seen before... This human is truly weird.)

[TL: down boy down, don’t think about perv stuff]

However, he doesn’t look like a bad human. Even though he was weird, at least he was much better than those humans who came to attack, and annihilated the

people from the village where I was born in.

(Those fellows were probably from the Alwina Kingdom. But. why were they here..?)

The village that I was born and raised in belonged to the allied nations of Belcania. Belcania's neighbouring nation was once a large country that took pride in their glory, the Alwina Kingdom.

Their history began from long ago... They ruled over the continent until 1000 years ago, but it was a story from the old days. Majority of their territory was divided into several countries, while the mere leftover pieces of land and political powers slowly dwindled from the siege of surrounding countries. At the very end, when a century passed, their long history was marked to an end. It had transformed into the descriptions of ruined countries that existed only in history books.

It was probably around 3 years ago when the situation completely changed. A new leader reigned over the royal family of the Alwina Kingdom that was on the verge of their downfall.

Reona also didn't know about the details. Since she was young, aside from the village that she was born to and raised in, and the faraway Belcania Allied Nations where her father, who was a soldier, took her to, she didn't know of any other world outside of her village. Listening to the small talk of her father who only returns to the village once every several months with a merchant who comes to trade was her only way to learn about the outside world. For Reona, talk about the situation of another country was like something from a different world.

However, the new leader was a wielder of great power, an existence loved by the spirits. She remembered her father telling her that he had annihilated multiple nations' forces that had gathered near the border, completely erasing the country called Alwina alone.

It was said that even the attack of magicians which were protected by the spirits more than a thousand times would not reach him, and no magic had ever had any effect on him. Even with tens of thousands of soldiers as his opponent, they couldn't even taint his snow white clothes with a speck of dirt.

(Now that you mention it, that magician, too, is... But, it was probably someone else. Such a terrible monster wouldn't be killed so easily like that.)

Reona's father taught her how to fight with bare hands, concentrating the spirits from the surrounding areas to her fist to strike. However, the weak point of this fighting style was that when countered by a stronger magical attack, it will be neutralized. But, that point applies to all spirit magic as well.

The one attack that she had put all her strength into was blocked because the magician that visualized a glowing white figure was manipulating a concentrated and enormous magic power. But, it wasn't on the level from the story I was told. ...I think.

After all, such an existence didn't have any reason to bring only a mere 10 underlings to attack a remote village like this.

(Father may know something.)

It would be far to reach the city where the troops that father commands were stationed, but with the physical strength and legs of this queer benefactor, and mine, we could arrive there earlier than expected.

I need to report on the matters that have happened to father. It was the duty of those who survived. At the very least, it was one way of performing the funerals for those villagers who were murdered, or so Reona thought.

[ED: By the tropes, your pappy's probably dead or MIA yo]

But, Reona didn't know.

Alwina kingdom had declared war against each of the neighboring kingdoms, and it had started with the invasion of the Belcania allied nations.

Her father and his subordinates had left the city where they had been stationed at for scouting.

Alwina Kingdom's new leader were twin brothers, and that they have joined the invasion army.

There was no way for Reona and Rina, as well as Karito, to know this.

Just yet.

“Impossible, it is impossible! Impossible, impossible..!!”

It was evening, and most of the houses in the village have turned into ashes, and the wreckage turned black. A man with a splendid beard past his middle age, who looked like a commanding officer, repeated the words in a daze.

The man's armor which has been polished until it was shining, and the mantle that was richly embroidered with golden threads trembled a little bit. His whole body shook, as if a local earthquake was happening right beneath his feet.

The expression plastered on his face wasn't one of anger due to the murder of his subordinates. It was one of utter fear for the looming future connoted by the dead body of the white robed magician lying amongst the corpses of the villagers and soldiers.

It was all fine, until they had dispatched the imperial knights to call back Rezado, the white robed magician and his subordinates, who sneaked out of the encampment without permission.

The Dragon Riders rushed back in a hurry to report, and so, he brought some soldiers under his command to rush there to take a look the scene from the report with his own eyes. The scene that flashed right in front of him was nothing but a nightmare.

Even with the saying that the beastmen were blessed with physical ability higher than human beings, and a unique spirit magic, it was still unthinkable for Rezado to be killed in this remote village which looked like it only had a

population of around a hundred people.

After all, Rezado was the current leader of the Alwina Kingdom. He was the younger brother who was personally called by the name [Spirit God].

With regards to the current invasion, Rezado was granted a post directly from the most prominent leader of the Kingdom, his very own brother, as the supreme commander of the invasion troops. But in reality, the officers assigned under him were the ones carrying out the role as commanders, as he drags around several soldiers to do whatever he pleases. It was common for him to massacre the people of the region he invaded. There was even a time where he annihilated a whole settlement with magic.

The actual role for Rezado was to act as artillery on the battlefield. Although he is still incomparable to his elder twin, the scale of his usable magic power is still worth that of a hundred common magicians. With such enormous magic power, he could easily blow away a strong fort or two while humming away. He, himself, is a tactical weapon with spirit magic.

With a background matching his ability, there was no one who could stop his terrible conduct aside from his older brother. In places of entertainment, on the way here, he had already destroyed three villages, and who knows how many people and residents have been killed by his hands.

...However, describing him as [was] is more accurate.

Except for a few limited exceptions, there were no dead people who can use magic.

Rezado, having a body that could manipulate spirit magic on a large scale, had formed an armour that continuously evolves itself using the powers of the spirits. It was the very essence which created the illusion of a white aura surrounding him all the time.

Every existence in this world, be they big or small, is granted a divine protection by the spirits. There are no human beings who can have exist in this world without the divine protection. The armor spirit that Rezado and his twin older brother have were armours that unconsciously use a large number of spirits, which as a result, takes the form of a white aura that can be seen even

with the naked eye. It is an armour that repels away all harm meant for its wearer, including the interferences of those with divine protection.

It is truly an invincible defense, rather, it should have been so.

But this was just past tense now.

“This will not do! At this rate, I will be accused and get executed!” The man panicked.

By all means, it was natural to tremble in fear towards an existence that could pierce through Rezado’s spirit armour, which was said to be able to block off every possible attack. He truly was a person to be cautious of.

Nonetheless, this commander was just a small fry. The first thing that came to his mind was the problem of responsibility over the brutal killing of the leader’s brother, and the way of securing his own position from it.

“Track down that bastard who killed Rezado-sama! Mobilize the sky cavalry too! They can’t have gone too far yet!” The man ordered.

The sky cavalry comprises of mythical beasts - including Dragons, Griffons, and Hippogryphs - and of soldiers who ride on the beasts. Their duties are to execute reconnaissance from the sky, transport a number of soldiers, goods, and supplies, relaying messages, surprise attacks, and many others. The Imperial Knights were included in this too.

Aside from a number of dragons that have magical breaths, the rest of the mythical beasts have no way to execute a long distance attack. That results in those riding the mythical beasts to be magicians who could use spirit magic, or soldiers equipped with bombs and explosive bottles most of the time.

“General, there are two sets of footprints that continue to the west. They are probably survivors of the village.” A soldier reported.

“It must be those guys! Chase them immediately!” The commander demanded.

If he could at least bring back the head of the perpetrator, he could restore the situation. After all, the current king of the Alwina Kingdom is very strict towards useless subordinates and demi-humans.



“Furthermore, mobilize one battalion to hunt the target! Everyone else is to wait at the encampment until we come back!” The commander decreed.

One battalion from the Alwina Kingdom consists of 600 people. The soldiers whom he had brought here numbered 150. The total number of soldiers who were chasing down the target is 750.

Among the mobilized soldiers, almost all of them was infantries equipped with swords and spears, and cavalry soldiers. There were also few bowmen and magicians assigned to the troops to cope with long distance attacks as well.

“Chase them with full speed! We must take the head of the criminal who has murdered Rezado-sama, or the King himself will cut our necks instead!” The commander shouted.

“What do we do with the bodies here?” A soldier asked.

“Leave the corpses, except for the body of Rezado-sama! Time is precious!” The commander declared.

“The people of Alwina have left the village. It seems like they have moved to chase something.”

Shadows hid behind the forest, watching over the soldiers.

All of them were robust beastmen. They had steel shoulder pads engraved with markings of the groups they belong to.

The beastmen, besides their basic physical strength, have five senses, in particular, their sense of smell, hearing, and eyesight, that were much sharper than human beings. That is why they have high aptitude as scouts. They were the soldiers of the Belcania Allied Nations that were sent to scout the Alwina invasion army.

Of course, human beings were mixed in this group as well. Riding horses, they had waited away from the site.

“What should we do, Captain?” A subordinate called to the wolfman who stood out even among these beastmen with robust bodies.

With hair like silver itself twisting against each other, the man had animal ears and a tail of the same color as his hair, attracting the eyes of people.

His gaze that was as sharp as a blade were nailed onto the numerous corpses that were tossed behind. His canines that could be compared to the sharpness of a famous sword, peeped out from the corner of his mouth as he gritted his teeth, blood dripping from his fist as he curled it tightly. His fist was clenched so hard that the nails tore into his skin.

“...We will split into two groups. Half of the group will stand watch to the movements of their camp. The other half will go with me to stalk the chasing corps. If possible, we will go and protect their target. It is possible that we might come across survivors of the village.”

“Understood. ...Captain. Your daughters will surely live. They are your children after all.” One soldier stated.

“...Sorry.” Another soldier said.

The men disappeared into the darkness, performing their respective duties individually.

## 003 - Hunted

“-in other words, the Aruwina Kingdom is a country where only ordinary humans live in, and they are treating beastmen like Reona and Rina, and other people of different races as slaves?” Karito asked.

“(Chomp Chomp!) That’s right. From the King to the soldiers, all of them think that it is obvious to keep and raise beastmen like us as pets since we’re not different from beasts...(Nom Nom Nom) My father had always complained that they are too old-fashioned... (Nom Nom Nom!) Beastmen and other subspecies being slaves are already old stories from several hundred years ago.” Reona explained.

“Is it different now?” Karito questioned.

“(Nom nom...) Fuuh ah. I have heard the story that at that time, various beastmen slaves joined hands with some humans who went against the Alwina Kingdom and revolted all at once. Even though the physical strength of the beastman and demi-humans was much more than the humans’ at that time, they weren’t clever enough as their technology didn’t develop adequately. But, with the cooperation with human beings from the rebel army, they were taught how to fight using their skills and heads.” Reona elaborated. “It is not unusual for beastmen to marry the Royal Family now, and there are a lot of countries with beastmen as their kings as well. In any case, I don’t know much about other countries. Even the story I just told you was taught by my father.”

Several hours had passed since we escaped from the annihilated village. The sun had already completely set on the horizon.

The night’s darkness of this world without streets is so dark that it can’t be compared to the darkness of any downtown back on Earth. Every time night came, it made Karito feel like the world had totally sunk into darkness.

On the other hand, when you look up into the night sky, the number of shining stars in this world was several times more than that of Earth’s. It can’t even be compared to the starlight from planetariums.

The three of us decided to spend the night in the forest near the road. We dug

a shallow hole and made an open air fire with tree branches and leaves from the forest. We could scatter the smoke and control the light as well. It's one way that I learnt of when I checked the net about survival.

"Still, this is delicious. Even though the taste is rather strong, it is my first time eating this sort of food! Hey, Rina! You should eat without reserve. Because you bled a lot, you need to eat a lot of meat to replenish it." Reona stated.

"Ye-Yes, I understand. However, this bag sure is unusual..." Rina was looking at the object (retort pouch) in her hand with bewilderment and curiosity.

She had regained her consciousness on her older sister's back, just a while before Karito and Reona were deciding to camp out. Her condition was so good that the fact that her body and internal organs had been pierced by a blade seemed like a lie.

When she first woke up, she lost the memories she had before she lost consciousness (her village being overrun by Aruwina Kingdom's soldiers, and herself getting stabbed), but after a brief moment, she started to panic before she finally calmed down with the help of Reona. She hugged her younger sister who was screaming and thrashing violently at her chest, and kept stroking her head until she had finally quietened down.

When Rina had calmed down, Karito introduced himself to her. Looking at his unfamiliar appearance (black hair and eyes), unfamiliar figure (special armor), and unfamiliar weapon (M14EBR), Rina, who was only a girl from a remote village, was surprised to encounter an unknown existence like Karito at the beginning. But, because of her older sister's persuasion, he was able to avoid leaving a negative impression somehow.

Still, the decisive factor of persuasion was the phrase, 'her and her elder sister's saviour'.

It was at that moment when the two sisters who had just survived the slaughter, finished embracing each other while confirming their familial love for each other.

"—GRowwlll" The sound of a stomach growling, similar to the cry of small animal sounded at the same time.

One was blushing, while another one put her hand on the source of the sound and said [when you feel relieved you become hungry]. He doesn't even have to say who it was.

That was why, after they had collected the dried wood and started the fire, the three of them ate dinner while surrounding the open air fire.

Reona and Rina didn't have anything besides the clothes they wear on their bodies. They couldn't have taken any baggage while escaping from their village, which resulted in not having any food at all. It can't be helped since their house was burned down, and they had rushed out, not knowing when the pursuers would come.

The rations (combat ration) that those two ate were the rations from the self defense force which Karito had dished out.

They were puzzled at first, looking at the metal like bag (retort pouch), but as soon as they had eaten one piece of the hamburger steak, they seemed to be pleased. The two had carried the spoon to their mouths without stopping .

“Another serving!” Reona demanded.

“O-Onee-chan! He has already helped us with much effort and shared precious food to us! You musn't be unreasonable.” Reona, who was energetically asking for a second helping, was stopped by Rina immediately.

Being pointed out by her younger sister, the tension immediately reversed. Her animal ears and tail hung down as though she was feeling sorry.

“Ah, I'm sorry Karito, for me to ask for such luxury...” The beastwoman apologised.

“You don't have to worry about such a thing. Because there is a lot, you can eat as much as you want.” The male smiled.

Anyhow, he can literally provide them with an infinite amount. Having been in contact with friendly people after the span of a year, Karito was very generous and easy going..

...Is it okay for a wolfman to eat something that's mixed with onions? But, if

you remove the animal ears and tail, they look like a human, so it probably was okay, or so he thought. If it was no good, he would have to sincerely apologize. If he wasn't mistaken, chocolate is also not good.

As if emphasizing Reona's pleasant mood from being able to get a second serving of delicious food, the tail sprouting from her back swayed left and right. Looking at this, Karito smiled wryly as he carried a spoon of stewed pork and potato (a kind of military ration from the French Army) to his mouth, and looked up. Before he knew it, the face of Reona was right in front of him. Startled, Karito bent backwards.

Drool was coming out from her mouth. Her sight was set on the stew. The speed of her wagging tail was much faster than before. It was like a propeller or an electric fan.

What she was hoping for, the drool dripping from her lips already said it.

"...Do you want a bite?" Karito sighed.

"Is it okay?!" Reona yelped in excitement.

"Onee-chan!" Rina uttered exasperatedly.

He couldn't have betrayed her expectations after being shown such an expression. Judging from Rina's behavior, unbefitting of someone of a tender age, she seemed to act as a stopper for her wild elder sister.

Reona leaned to him with eyes was full of expectation. Her big breasts and deep cleavage shook slightly from the movement. Wondering if it was her aim or not (probably the latter), but having such goods brought near to him... It was like poison to Karito's eyes.

Whatever it is, it was touching Karito. She pressed it to his arm with all her strength. However, the softness and the warmth of her body wasn't transmitted to Karito through his armour plate that could deflect a rifle bullet.

(It would be better to make it thinner...)

By reflex, even Karito had his own share of sexual desire despite its disappointing extent.

As he was trying hard not to show his regrets through his face and words, he

took the spoon to Reona's mouth. Without hesitating, Reona tasted the tip of the spoon that was being held out.

It was an indirect kiss, the thought flashed for a moment in his mind. Even though he was suddenly hugged by a beautiful girl, all the same, Karito wasn't that inexperienced to be excited over an action of that level. In the first place, not to mention pretty girls, isn't such a reaction meaningless

"Delicious! Another bite!" Reona exclaimed.

"It looks like a CM of green juice."

[TL: for those who was interesting just google 青汁のCM]

Reona tilted her head to one side as if she wanted to ask what was green juice. My smile collapsed when I held out another spoon for her to take another bite. Her animal ears were twitching up and down happily, as if showing Reona's state of mind to her surroundings.

"Onee-chan is so embarrassing..." Rina sighed.

"I can't help it! It's so delicious! Hey, Rina, you take a bite too." Reona suggested.

"Fue... A-An ~" Rina opened her mouth.

She thought about it for a moment before responding in the end. It looks like she was interested in the stew as well.

Reona turned her back to Karito and lowered her back to assume a crawling position, and held out the spoon to feed the stew to her younger sister. Karito was watching them warmly, but...

[TL: wait for it]

At that moment, he noticed something.

There was only a small cloth that was not even close to covering Reona's waist. As result of her nearly crawling posture, the important part of the women which originally had to be hidden was revealed to the fullest.

[TL: I know it!]

[ED: As expected...]

“Wait, I can see it , I can see it! Rather, isn’t she making fun of me?!)

The cloth that was covering her secret region wasn’t inferior to those that covered her breasts. The white cloth’s level of design was much better than the rag cloth that was used to wrap around her breasts.

...Gah, the piece of cloth that acts as underwear was considerably thin, and it was tightly digging into Reona’s sensual body. Thanks to that, it went beyond the description of being sexy to the point that it can only be expressed as erotic. The slit line was completely clear. This sexiness can easily beat that of gravure idols.

On top of that, her tail was shaking like those classic hypnosis methods using a string on five yen coin. As he was looking at it, Karito’s reason felt like it was being snatched away little by little. Is she trying to tempt me? God damn it! She’s trying to tempt me today?!

The spoon being taken away by Reona has left Karito’s right hand empty. That very right hand was unsteadily reaching toward Reona’s buttocks. .

Just another five cm until her buttocks. It was at moment that Reona turned to face Karito. The figure of Karito stretching his hands halfway towards her was captured in her eyes.

“What are you doing?” Reona asked.

“Waa?! I didn’t do anything?!” Karito fumbled.

[ED: Yeah right.]

He tried to pull himself back, but it was already too late.

Reona recollected the place of Karito’s hands and her posture from before, and smiled complacently, figuring out what had Karito intended to do. .

The smile isn’t like the smile of pure joy when she tasted a dish from another world, but of that like a succubus trying to tease him.

“Kukuku, if my benefactor wishes to, I will let you touch my ass once, twice, or as many times as you want, but it should be done in secret, okay?” Reona continued smiling.



“...Forgive me. Please let me in on such a thing some other time.” Karito apologised.

“I am looking forward to it.” Reona smiled.

“Ah, Onee-chan is too shameful...” Rina blushed.

As expected, it was impossible to do sexual things openly in front of the young girl (Rina), so I would have to endure it. But, since I have made the promise, if there is take two, I will take the opportunity.

Karito thought that Reona was like those voluptuous Onee-san character who makes fun of the MC in eroge.

The image of him embracing Rina was overturned soon.

“However, Karito... You truly are a strange fellow.” Reona stated.

The moment he retracted his hand that was stretched out to her raw plump ass before, he tried to avert his eyes from embarrassment. His ears reacted to the slightest sound, so at the very least he could turn to look at Reona once again.

And what Karito witnessed was the loveliness that teased a naive young guy, her beautiful face which gave off a unique eloquence that would not let the partner feel discomfort, for a moment, that face was covered in melancholy.

When Reona noticed that Karito was looking at her again, she immediately returned to her smiling face. .

Not having the courage to closely examine the nature of the gloomy feeling that crossed her face in that moment, Karito could only go along with her smile, before looking down to the stew in his hands.

“That reminds me, how old are you, Reona?” Karito asked.

“I’m 15 years old this year.” The beastwoman replied.

“You are younger than me?! It is a foul play to be this erotic this young! Rather, I thought you were older than me!” Karito complained.

“Erm, how old are you, Karito?” Reona asked.

“19... No, a year has passed since I came here, so I will be 20.” Karito answered.

“Eh, is that so? You don’t really... ..Nn?” Reona looked up suddenly.

Her animal ears twitched a little, as if trying to find something.

“Is there something wrong?” Karito questioned.

“Onee-chan?” Rina looked worried.

“I heard something just now. It was the cry of a beast... There is the voice of a human too!”

“A pursuer!” Karito frowned.

He covered the fire in the hole with the soil that he dug out immediately to put it out. The figures of the three were surrounded by darkness. Moonlight didn’t reach them much due to the trees’ thick branches, and the leaves growing on them.

Karito listened carefully while equipping his M14EBR. The silence spread, making the world feel like it had stopped moving. Only the sound of the leaves rustling in the wind could be heard.

He looked around him hard for the figures of people, but he couldn’t find any... That was what he would like to say, but when being cautious like this, even the silhouettes of trees and bushes would look suspicious in the dark. It’s bad for his heart. In particular, Rina was terribly scared. Even though Karito couldn’t see her face clearly in the dark, he could sense the fear coming out from her clearly.

Because he couldn’t understand this turn of events, he asked the instigator of the situation in a low voice.

“Was it really the voice of people?”

“Don’t make light of the sharp ears of an adult of the Garm tribe... However, regarding the direction to where I have heard the voice, it seems to have come from the sky...” Reona elaborated.

“...Sky?” Karito asked.

Reona looked up towards the night sky. Following her, Karito looked up as well.

For a while, nothing seemed to change. The pitch black sky was still filled with bright stars.

But, he didn't have time to admire it this time. Karito equipped his goggles and switched it to the infrared night vision mode. The world in his field of vision that was shrouded in darkness changed into colors consisting of red, purple, blue, and black. By looking at the different colors of heat that each object has, it allowed Karito to see in the darkness.

In the sky where even starlight disappears as if it was swiped with ink, a pink silhouette floated.

From the looks of it, it seemed like a person who was sitting on a four legged beast with wings spreading out from its back. The distorted large silhouette swooped down towards Karito and his group. He realized it was because the human mounting the beast released his hands from the reins, and projected his right hand.

“Enemy attack!!” Karito yelled.

The warning and the jockey's right hand twitched at the same time. A light ball swept over the tip of the trees, hitting the ground several meters behind Karito, and an explosion occurred. The three people flew from the impact and fell down.

A wild shierk resounded.

“Hoatchaa!?”

Unfortunately, the place where Karito fell onto was the place where he had put out the open air fire just now. It's only been a while since it was put out, so the soil was still extremely hot. The armor Karito had equipped didn't have any resistance towards fire damage, and thus, he was burnt.

He jumped up immediately, patting the area around his stomach to cool off the burned area. At that moment, a large shadow passed by overhead. Reona saw through the real nature of that being at once. The Garm tribe didn't only have sharp ears, but also sharp eyes that see well in the night.

“That was a Griffon! It's the pursuers from Aruwina Kingdom!” Reona exclaimed.

“It’s slightly unexpected for them to chase from the sky..! Do you know what kind of attack was it just now?” Karito asked urgently.

“It’s the Magic Cannon! You will turn into meat paste if you receive a direct hit, so be careful!” The beastwoman warned.

He looked at the bomb’s trace of impact. Judging from the scale of the explosion and the indentation on the ground, its power seems equal to a small sized mortar, or an RPG (Anti-Tank Rocket).

Unlike an ordinary cannonball, it didn’t shatter to pieces when it exploded. Even though he didn’t have to worry about being damaged by the shattered pieces, it was still dangerous. With this power, it seems like it will not be a good idea to use the surrounding trees as a shield. You would either be pulverized together with the trees, or be ripped apart by the exploding woodchips.

The griffon that had just left turned back and started attacking again.

“Reona, bring Rina to the other side. Lower your stance and escape quickly!” Karito ordered.

“What do you intend to do, Karito!?” Reona demanded.

“I’m going to fight back!” The man stated.

As he took some distance away from the sisters, he made a diversion shot with his M14. He intended to draw the attention of the griffon rider with this. By removing the silencer, the firing flame (muzzle flash) of a large diameter rifle stood out in the darkness. As expected, the rider turned the head of the griffon towards Karito who was visible from firing flame.

This was fine. Karito thrust one knee out and shifted to a shooting in the [kneeling position](#). He selected full auto on his M14EBR, and aligned to the griffon’s silhouette that grew bigger over time.

Simultaneously, as he stopped his breathing for a moment, he made the shot. He suppressed the gun that was moving intensely from the rapid fire. He corrected his aim with his finger from each burst, and finished shooting a magazine in no time.

Among the bullets that have been shot, ten or more of them tore up the flesh

of the griffon along with its rider, crushing his head, and bursting his internal organs, completely stopping their breaths.

Thanks to the experience of anti aircraft shooting on high-speed flight targets, (mainly attacking the enemy's helicopter. Depending on the model, it can even be shot using a handgun) it resulted in the rider being careless, charging straight into them without being able to take any evasive movement, making the target bigger.

"Uo, how dangerous!" Karito breathed heavily.

Two seconds later, Karito released his shooting position and rolled to the side. The griffon and its rider's body crashed into the place where Karito had been. *Gusha!* Karito grimaced as he heard the unpleasant gory sound of the impact from nearby.

"There are more reinforcements! Four riders will approach soon, and there is dragon mixed in this one too!"

"As expected of fantasy! Will the dragon breathe out fire as well?" Karito asked.

"Of course!" Reona nodded.

"How far can the dragon's breath reach!?" Karito questioned.

"Erm, probably around 50 melts? That was what my father told me before, but I've never seen the breath on my own. Anyway, let's escape. The opponent this time is too difficult to handle!" The beastwoman urged.

[TL: melts probably their own standard of measuring, I think it is meter.]

Karito operated his PDA while rushing the two of them, replacing his equipped weapon to another from the item box. His breath was heavy, and his heart was throbbing intensely too. However, what allowed him to pass a calm judgment was the <WBGO(Game)> which offered a sublime real battleground experience.

It was in an anti air battle such as this, that it was important to show large offensive power to his opponent to suppress them, Karito thought. Be it a bluff or anything else, it would work fine. If we show them excessive firepower, even they would not approach us recklessly.

The weapon Karito chose according to his plan was [M46 light machine gun](#) made by the Fabrique Nationale company. It was the improved type from the [MINIMI](#) sub machine gun that even the Japan Self-Defense Force adopted for their special force. It can use the [M16/M4](#) assault rifle bullet on its belt link too.

If it uses the 5.56mm Nato bullet, its power might degrade, but its firepower far exceeded the M14.

[TL: I doubt you guys want to see an ammo so I didn't bother to search it]

It was said that it was lighter than the original model, but it is still 1 kg heavier than the M14BR. While being able to reload 200 bullets into the belt and feeling the profound weight of the light machine gun, Karito ran towards the centre of the forest. Just diagonally ahead was where the two parties had moved first, with Reona carrying Rina who didn't have the stamina and running power compared to the two.

The world recovered its light suddenly. When I took off my goggles and moved my neck to find the cause, a swirling, dazzling light sphere was floating in the night sky. It seemed to be a type of magic flare.

I heard a roar which sounded like a cow and a lion from the sky.

“The dragon breath is coming!” Reona warned.

At the same time as Reona's warning, Karito jumped to the side and turned over, pointing the muzzle of the light machine gun at the area where he heard the roar of the beast.

The marked dragon approached rapidly from the distance of 100m. Its height was about 20m, the size which probably about the same as a light airplane. The body that was illuminated by the flare light was gray, and it was covered with thick muscles that seemed to enable it to dance in the sky freely. Looking as if it was accumulating something, the dragon raised its neck, its face and throat bloated.

Anticipating the dragon's breath, the MK46 spouted out fire. The light machine gun discharged 5.56mm bullet flying from the muzzle at the initial speed of 940m/s and discharged 12 bullet/s. The tracer shell was loaded into the

belt link at one shell for each 5 bullets, and it allows one to see the trajectory like a red laser clearly. He altered the trajectory of the tracer along with the barrage.

[TL: Tracer shell was just a bullet that was painted red on the tip of it like [this](#)]

*Thud thud!* Karito could hear the sound of the rifle bullets sinking into the body of the dragon between the intervals of the gunshot. When Karito looked at it, the bullets hit between the area of its chest and its long neck.

Forgetting the existence of its rider, the dragon writhed in pain and agony as its balance broke.

Like the griffon from a while ago, the dragon fell and plunged at the direction of the three. This time, it went across the space between Karito and Reona, who was carrying Riina, breaking a few trees in the process before coming to a stop.

It was unfortunate for the three, but the rider was nearly unhurt. In addition to the fact that the 5.56mm shell couldn't pierce through the dragon's body, its body became a cushion for the fall.

"Die! You traitor of the human race-" The rider yelled.

"You stupid bastard!" Karito sighed.

He fired without question. Holes appeared in the rider's winter coat layered with thick skin armour as the man was forced to perform a dance of death.

The bullet shells lodged through the back of the body, and dug into the body of the dragon that laid on its side. The dragon leaked out a painful scream and raised its head; it wasn't dead yet. It seems like the 5.56mm bullet wasn't enough to kill the target this big, he analyzed calmly while shooting its head, this time stopping its breath completely.

"Amazing, to kill a dragon this easily..." Reona was in awe.

Disregarding Reona's admiration, Karito remained cautious. But, there was no sign of attack coming from the remaining Sky Cavalry. They were circling in the air. Things seemed to go according to Karito's plan. They became cautious of Karito's assault, and were keeping their distance.

The effect of flare disappeared, and darkness fell onto the forest once again. This was the most suitable timing.

“At any rate, let’s run. We will have look for some place to hide.” Karito instructed.

“I heard that there is a fort for travellers to take a rest in after we pass through this forest! If I am not mistaken, it is this way!” Reona replied.

As soon as Reona said that, she began to run. Karito ran after her as well. The pursuers shot up the flares again, but they continued to run without minding it. Within a forest with slippery grounds and trees roots sticking out of the earth, the two of them continued running with a speed like that of a sprinter on flat ground.

As soon as they went through the forest, they saw the shadow of a building. It was surrounded by high walls in the darkness; it was a stone fortress.

“It’s there!” Reona shouted.

They sprinted with all their strength. Because there wasn’t any place to hide, the two sprinted with a speed that could compete with a car, and they passed through the open gate and entered inside.

It seemed to be an unpopular place as it had that abandoned look where people haven’t been using it for some time. After all, at the point where the information about Aruwina Kingdom invading was heard, users of this place like travelling merchants and adventurers will naturally evade coming to the direction of Reona’s village.

He scanned the surroundings to make sure, but as expected, there was no other sign of life. The inside of the three storey building was pitch black as parts of the door and the windows were blocked, Karito took out a chemical light (when you bend it, the liquid inside will react and glitter) from his item box and lit up their surroundings. From the look of it, the first floor was a dining room.

They found a lamp in the cabinet enshrined in the corner of the room, and lit it up as lighting of the first floor.

He left Reona and Rina there and looked for a staircase to the upper floor. When he arrived on the roof, he looked for a place that was as inconspicuous as possible.



Soon, the pursuers were circling in the sky around the fort. They had obviously noticed that Karito had escaped to this fort. For certain, they would be watching the fortress where Karito has shut themselves in.

Surely they would be chased again if they attempt to escape from the fortress. Even if they had to remain confined in the fortress, there was a high probability that Karito would not be able to cope when they attack continuously

If they were to be caught by pursuers as it was, what kind of experience will Rina and Reona go through? That thought dominated Karito's mind rather than his own safety. It would truly be terrible.

"Rather than saying that we've succeed in running away from them, it's more accurate to say that we've been cornered by them, huh?" Karito sighed.

What should he do now? Karito wracked his brain.

## 004 - I am a hero

“They’re here, General!”

“Yes! The fugitives who killed Rezado-sama are taking refuge in that fort!”

Approximately 90 minutes after Karito had entered the fort, the Alwina Kingdom’s troops had received notifications from the Sky Cavalry, and arrived at the fort in front of the forest.

Numbering more than one battalion (approximately 600 people), around 750 soldiers from various branches of division alighted from horses, supply troops, and carriages. All of them were preparing for the battle.

“The targets are human man and a girl. In addition, there is also a beastwoman, totaling to 3 people. We tried to catch them, but we suffered a counter attack from the man and lost a griffon rider and dragon rider.”

“How could we have lost the dragon too!? Was that man also a magician?”

It’s very difficult to shoot down a sky cavalryman who’s flying in the sky with bows and arrows or throwing stones, unless a barrage of attacks was released.

Thus, the pursuing commander asked through the process of elimination, but his subordinate who reported the matter shook his head.

“It is unknown. We’ve never seen that kind of attack before. The man was pointing an iron stick-like thing that was either a cane or a magic item, and before we realised it, our subordinates who were trying to attack were killed after the sound of exploding gunpowder. I sent for my subordinates to collect the bodies of those who were killed after the fugitives escaped to the fort, and after an inspection, they have the same wound as Rezado-sama who was killed in the demi-human village.”

“...As expected, it seems like we have gotten the right guy who killed Rezado-sama.” The commander frowned.

“I also agree with that. Since those people have taken refuge within the fortress, our soldiers are now taking turns watching them from a high altitude as a precaution for a similar attack.” The commanding officer reported.

“Tell your units to not start attacking before I give my permission. If the fort collapses from the attack of the Sky Cavalry, we will need to dig out their corpses.”

The main attack of Sky Cavalry was a magic attack by the lead magician. In addition to the airstrike, bombs, molotov cocktails, as well as the dragon breath were commonly used.

All of them execute high destructive power to be proud of, but at times, it has to be taken into serious consideration as it also leads to bombing of the wrong targets and increasing their own damage, particularly in this case where they had to arrest the criminals and offer their bodies to the King to explain the state of affairs at the very least. Therefore, the order to attack from the sky isn't something that could be done easily.

Still, by watching from the sky so that they would not secretly escape while relying on their large war force to charge in... With this amount of people, they could crush and arrest them by sheer force like usual.

Using the Sky Cavalry to blast open the front gates and the walls surrounding the fort using magic, bombs, and dragon breath, thus opening a path inside as the ground soldiers arrive. This was the basic tactic to attack a fortress in this world.

“Each unit, form a formation and prepare to charge! Even though there are only a few enemies don't lower your guard!”

The red grid marks displayed on the screen... From the large numbers of them, Karito can't help but heave an amazed sigh while smiling in distress.

When a person faces extraordinary fear and despair, they become creatures that would laugh before showing their negative feelings.

“With this number, they're already on the level of completely crushing us...”

What the PDA screen projected was a real time picture of the forest and the wasteland taken from the sky.

Karito had fired a shot to intimidate the Sky Cavalry circling around above the fort. He then sped away to distance himself from the enemies before sending out

a reconnaissance plane.

It was a fine product called <[SwitchBlade](#)> that carried a cylindrical container similar to an anti-tank missile launcher. As it launches, the wings will extend out and ascend. After reaching a fixed altitude, the mechanism was made to move in circular motion automatically.

You can control it through the PDA, and the information it obtains will be displayed in the terminal. Because it was equipped with explosives, it is possible to do a kamikaze attack as well. Right now, Karito was flying the machine at a higher altitude than the Sky Cavalry to prevent them from detecting it.

Underneath the body of the aircraft was a camera that can capture any moving body above the ground and mark it with a red sign . From the direction of the forest that Karito had just gone through, it was already packed with deep red marks.

Are the pursuers of the Alwina Kingdom's forces all here? Do they really need to send all these men just to catch 3 people? He can't help but want to cry.

(...Is that white-robed magician a big shot in the army?)

Considering if that was the truth, I could understand why they had desperately mobilized a large army. In fact, it is happening now.

“What the hell should I do now..?” He sighed.

Karito, who had been controlling the reconnaissance plane from the staircase of the dance floor that connects to the rooftop, was already reeling in exhaustion from the difference in war power.

When he finally couldn't endure the loneliness anymore, Karito had ran away from the mountain hut, walking on and on, continuously without end. And when he thought he had at last arrived at a human settlement, it was a slaughter fest. Experiencing his first time killing, and when he finally had a warm time with the only surviving beastmen sisters, they were chased around and forced into this development now...

His shoulders drooped from the mental and physical exhaustion. It can't be helped when looking at this reality. It was necessary for him to work out a countermeasure immediately.

“.....”

Once his thoughts were refreshed, it became easy afterward on how he should act. Since he was given the experience to choose the right choice in a limited time in <WBGO>, he had already tempered his metal power so that he would not panic even under a disadvantageous condition. Or it might also be the influence of him experiencing becoming a killer for the first time.

Deciding the goal, choosing the way to do it... Karito made a decision.

“Alright.” He said to himself determinedly.

After finishing his meditation, Karito went back to the first floor. The figure of Reona hugging the frightened Rina was lit by the lamp light.

“Onee-chan, what will happen to us..?” The young girl asked nervously.

“It will be alright. Don’t worry, because this time, I will protect Rina...” The beastwoman attempted to comfort her sister.

Reona looked up, and upon noticing Karito coming down, she had a relieved expression. She had remained calm in front of her little sister, but looking at the situation where the army of pursuers were waiting outside to kill them, she felt quite tired.

After patting her little sister’s head, she plodded towards Karito to hear his story as her ears and tail swung about restlessly.

“How is the situation outside? Is the Sky Cavalry still hanging around?” She asked worriedly.

“It’s becoming worse. The main force of the pursuers have already gathered inside the forest, and there are at least several hundreds of them.” Karito stated bluntly.

“...It... ...Isn’t a joke right..?” Reona asked weakly.

Karito held out the PDA silently. Let alone knowing how to use the PDA, Reona who had never seen any electronic devices before was looking between Karito’s face and the PDA in wonder .

Looking at the number of luminous dots shown in the sky and the symbol of

the coat of arms displayed on the flags hoisted by the soldiers, she was roughly able to understand the function of this PDA in this situation. In other words, this thing that looked like a hand mirror was a magic item that allowed you to look at the situation outside with a bird's eye view, and the shining red marks represented for the enemy.

“Ha-Hahaha...” Dry laughter escaped her lips.

Just like Karito, she never expected for the Alwina Kingdom to mobilize such a large force to pursue them. She could only laugh in resignation.

After laughing for a while, her mouth was tugged wryly as she looked at Karito's face.

“From... From now on, what should we do!?” Reona despaired.

“The only way out of this fort is through the front gates. If we go out from there, the cavalry in the sky will surely notice, so no matter how fast our legs are, there will be no way for us to outrun the waves of horses and dragons...” Karito explained.

“If there were only horses, we could scatter them when we are inside of the forest, but there is no way we can shake off the griffons and dragons, even for me. They would definitely overtake us.” She frowned.

“Then, instead of running away, it would be much better to hide somewhere. But, we would be found immediately if they decided to use the infiltration tactic to investigate, even in the woods at night, and if we were to shut ourselves in here, the danger will be too big.” He sighed. “If the 3 of... No, if it was only me and Reona, no matter how advantageous the protection we have, there is no way we can win with this much difference in fighting power. If we were to be attacked from both the sky and the ground at the same time, we would be easily defeated. Even if we prepared a trap beforehand, they could simply blow up the fort with magic.”

Weapons with trap systems... They were mainly sentry guns or land mines, and the number of installations were restricted. However, it would be destroyed

immediately if it receives a magic bombardment from the Sky Cavalry. Karito knew that because similar approaches have already been done in the game before.

...Actually, the opponent had already banned bombardments or bombings with magic, but, there was no way Karito could know that.

“Let’s say that even if we manage to repel the soldiers, there is a possibility that their reinforcements will rush out towards us again. Since the reinforcements wouldn’t have come to us, I think it is much better to arrange an escape plan rather than shut ourselves in here.” Karito suggested.

This isn’t a game. There is also no clear guideline to set a strategy.

Even if he knew that their deaths were the conditions for defeat, as long as the conditions for victory remain uncertain, the need to lock themselves in the fort and fight against Alwina’s army was also ambiguous.

...No, rather, he should be thinking about it this way. If it is to avoid the defeat conditions, there was no need for Reona and Rina to fight several hundreds of armed forces.

“Therefore I thought about something.” Karito stated.

“Do you have some plans!?” Reona asked agitatedly.

“...This plan isn’t on the level of a strategy.” He smiled with self-derision. “...I will become the decoy and charge straight towards those guys. In that time, Reona should take Rina and escape.”

“...Ha?” The beastwoman blanked out.

After freezing for a good 10 seconds, Reona’s blank mind rebooted, and she grabbed Karito. With both hands, she grabbed and pulled on the collars of the young man with the black hair as she scowled at him while gnashing her teeth.

“What are you talking about?! Things like voluntarily running into your own death... I will never allow it!” She yelled.

“I can’t help it. After all, there is no other plan that I can think of. If we left it as it is, the three of us will die. It would be much better for someone to attract the

company outside while the others escaped from here.” He reasoned calmly.  
“Also, I am suited to become a decoy.”

“Even if you say so, there is no way for me to accept that plan so readily! ‘I am suitable’? What do you mean by suitable! Why must it be you?!” She shouted, furious.

“...Because Reona and Rina are family.” He stated.

“..!” Reona started at that.

The two of them spontaneously looked towards Rina whose eyes wavered in anxiety, as she looked at her elder sister grab onto their savior and quarrel.

Karito turned his eyes toward Reona again, and he began to remove the hands that were clenched in his collar quietly. The hands that were holding onto Karito’s collar hardened and trembled a little bit.

“I don’t have any acquaintances, let alone family in this world. But, Reona still has your important younger sister. Isn’t your father still alive? Do you still want to fight and die like this? What do you think this is for?” Karito asked.

“B-But.” Her hands trembled harder.

“I don’t have anyone. But, Reona still has your family... ..That’s why, it’s okay...” He smiled at her.

“...You... Karito, why do you need to go to this extent?” She demanded.

“Why, huh?” He mumbled.

Reona lost all the strength in her arms. Feeling the warmth from both of the arms of Reona that seeped to his palms through his gloves, Karito felt his mouth loosen unconsciously.

It is this very warmth that he can call a reason.

“If this is in a movie, this will be a more embarrassing scene where I declare my decision, but...” He trailed off.

“What... What is it?” Reona asked softly.

“First of all, I don’t want Reona and Rina to die. With that reason alone, I think



it is enough for me to fight.” Karito smiled once more.

After his parents died, he quit high school, shut himself from the world, and lived like a zombie. By the time he noticed it, he had already been sent to this world. Far from getting to know anyone, without knowing that no one would come, Karito had waited for the visitor that would never come and shut himself in his own small world, living in isolation. He was almost crushed by the loneliness.

To run away from the loneliness, he started to roam around to look for humans. Anyone would be fine as long as he could meet a person, and as a result, he experienced killing someone for the first time.

Then, he came across Rina and Reona.

The distance they had fled, tasting a slightly noisy meal around an open air fire, that little bit of contact with the sisters...

That alone was enough. The Karito now can risk his life for the trivial memories that Reona and Rina had given him.

...He never expected that he would someday do something like this, things that would only happen in movies and dramas where you risked your life fighting for someone that you’ve met for less than a day. .

If such a heroic role is needed, then he would do it with all he could, he swore.

Since it was a role that any man would surely have dreamed about once in their life, it should be allowed for him to look good and show off at such a time.

[ED: Really..?]

[TL: trying to be a prince riding a white horse to save the damsel in distress... yup]

“Anyway, I will attract their attention as much as possible. In that time, you need to escape towards the opposite side of the forest. I will scatter some smokescreen so it should be enough to deceive those monitoring from the sky too.” Karito elaborated more on his strategy before separating from Reona and passing by Rina to move towards the stairs.

At that moment, Rina’s small hands caught the hem of his clothes, and he

stopped immediately.

“Ple-Please don’t go. I don’t want you to die...” She pleaded as her eyes blurred with tears of fear and panic.

Her innocence was clear to him. Being engulfed by a pleasant feeling, Karito stroked her head gently.

Rina’s golden hair was so smooth that it made him wonder what kind of shampoo she used. In the first place, he didn’t even know whether shampoo existed in this world.

Relaxing from the surprise of the feeling of a hand resting on top of her head, she tried to shake it off gently with her small hand.

I looked at the reconnaissance display from the <[SwitchBlade](#)> once again. I found out that the Alwina Kingdom’s troops had begun to break into formations inside the forest. The other side seemed to be moving for an all out attack as well.

Operating the PDA, I changed my overall equipment from inside item box. The important points of this strategy were the smokescreens, bluffs, and something flashy.

“Let’s be as flashy as much as possible..!” He declared to himself.

First, he climbed up the stairs to the roof. Using the goggles, he switched it to night vision mode which amplifies the intensity of light that one can see in the dark, and peeked towards the sky from the shadows of the exit door. As expected there were dragons, griffons and other creatures that he couldn’t identify flying around the sky. With this, the strategy to snipe them from high grounds was made null.

He replaced his accessory equipment with a smoke screen grenade. It was a steel can the size of a 500 ml PET bottle, with its main body painted white. After removing the safety pin, he threw the grenade towards the roof and repeated this action a few more times. In no time, not only the roof, but the whole upper part of the fortress was covered by a large quantity of smoke coming out from the cans. As the upper part of the fortress was wrapped by smoke, from afar it

must have looked like a giant torch or an active volcano.

Immediately, he ran down the stairs to the first floor, and threw smoke grenades outside through the doorway. Karito threw more smoke grenades into the back yard from the back door, and in less than a minute, the fort was immediately covered in white smoke.

According to the specifications of the game, the smoke emitted from the smoke screen grenade was harmless. Even if you breathed in some, it will only result in a light coughing fit, so it should be alright for Reona and Rina too. However, gases or black smoke from fire hand grenades or tear-gas bomb were toxic, so you will need to wear a gasmask.

*“Cough W-What is this smoke?!”* Reona coughed.

“With this, they wouldn’t be able to know our circumstances for the a while. Before the smoke disappears, I want the two of you to escape from this fort while I go rampant. If you move alongside the wall, you will be able to reach the back of the fort immediately.” Karito instructed.

“But, I can’t just leave Karito behind and escape!” The beastwoman protested.

Karito went out of the building where the thick smoke drifted, ignoring Reona’s pleas of bitterness and disagreement.

Of course, even Karito felt fear. Even if he wanted to pose as a hero and confront several thousands of soldiers to show off in front of a beautiful woman, scary things were still scary.

However, it was already too late because he already said and decided on it. He had to put it into action. Karito had chosen the road of death, a road of suffering. Since he had chosen the path of war, he will see to it until the end.

It was no longer possible to run away anymore, and he didn’t want to run because the girls who he decided to keep alive were staring at his back.

*“You are really a fool, a big fool...”* Reona stated softly.

*“...Even I think so too.”* Karito muttered as he advanced towards the front gate.

He changed his goggles to infrared night vision mode to see through the

smokescreen. Due to its function of visualising the heat of objects, Karito was able to ignore the wall of smoke and grasp the movements in the surrounding area.

He removed the bolt and opened the gate. The white smoke screen that had accumulated inside the courtyard started to flow outside towards the wasteland as soon as the gate was opened.

While being bathed by the stream of smoke, he replaced his weapon to a [MGL140](#). It was a grenade launcher that can fire 6 times in rapid succession. It was loaded with smoking flares too. He fired in sequence, scattering them in all directions. The newly fired white smoke surrounded the wasteland too.

He confirmed the reconnaissance display of the enemy forces once again. Restless movements could be observed as a result of his doing. The distance from the fort to the forest where the troops took up position was around 500 meters, and the distance was gradually shrinking.

“First, I need to give them a greeting.” He mumbled.

He changed the <Switch Blade> from reconnaissance mode to attack mode. The image of the wasteland from the drone’s point of view was reflected on the PDA screen. He directly changed the system from automatic mode to manual mode from the PDA, and the image shown changed immediately. All the movement controls of the drone had been transferred into Karito’s hands which trembled from unease.

He slid his fingers onto the touch screen and swooped over from <Switch Blade> to the red marks that represented the locations of more than a few hundreds of enemy soldiers filling the wasteland, its size steadily increasing. He gave slight revisions to the flight course of the drone that was equipped with explosives in it, moving it slightly to the rear. His aim was their headquarters where a large number of commanding officers gathered.

After discovering his target, he made some final orbital adjustments and accelerated the speed of the <Switch Blade>, plunging it into the group in a single breath. The shape of the headquarters expanded on the center of the screen quickly.

The last thing he received from the PDA was an image of a soldier noticing the

kamikaze attack, or rather, it was the frightened face of a man.

An explosion could be heard from a distance. The picture from the drone was cut off at the same time. It was the proof that the drone kamikaze has finished its last duty.

The screen immediately changed into the accessory and equipped armor selection. The new accessories and armors had already been selected. All he needed to do was to press the icon button.

There was no hesitation.

“Let the show of a lifetime begin!” He declared half-crazed as he pressed the icon button.

<<Equipment Choice>>

Armor: Juggernaut Mk3

<Equipment Effect>

- Bulletproof performance class IV : Nullifies damage from handgun bullets and any other bullets smaller than a 7.62mm bullet. Furthermore, reduces shot damages, adjacent attack and shock damages from the bullet of any caliber up to 50%, excluding a headshot.
- The goggles and reinforced helmet : Infrared night vision feature, optical night vision feature, built-in stun grenade nullification feature. Nullifies any damage from a headshot with any handgun utilising a 7.62 mm bullet or lower.
- Anti-blast protection level III : Decreases 75% of explosion damage.
- Fireproof protection measures : Fire damage nullified.
- Internal ventilation : All damage from gases nullified.
- Physical strength support : Possible to move heavy loads (However it can't exceed the upper limits of the equipment.)
- Heavy armament: 50% decrease in speed.

Weapon : [M134 Minigun](#)

## Weapon: M134 Minigun

### <Performance>

- Caliber: 7.62 mm x 51
- Number of bullet can be loaded: 4000 rounds
- Rate of fire: 4000 per minutes.

### <Equipment Effect>

- Heavy Armament : Dash disabled.

[TL: I didn't know how the hell this can be called minigun.... I am not a gun expert. But there will be a lot of butt being busted this night from this boy.]

“Wha... What on earth happened there?!” One of the officers yelled.

There is no sign or omen at all.

The moment orders to attack were given to the 100 soldiers, it was withdrawn as white smoke immediately concealed the abandoned fort. Suddenly, an explosion struck the headquarters.

In spite of the injured personnel, what the Alwinan forces were more concerned about was the occurrence of an accident from the rear, causing the unrest of the soldiers in the frontlines. Because of the damage to the headquarters which commanded all the military units, the order to halt the soldiers wasn't given, and the Alwinan forces gathered in the wasteland were overrun by confusion now.

“Some... Someone, hurry up and bring the healers!” Someone shouted urgently.

“I.... ..I can't hear anything...” A soldier muttered blankly.

“My... My leg... Ahhhh!” Another cried out in despair.

The headquarters which was the explosion point devolved into pandemonium.

All that remained were those with slight injuries, screaming as they scattered, those who bled from both ears, aimlessly loitering, and those near the explosion

point who lost their four limbs. Amongst them were several people lying silently on the ground. Even with just a glance, you could see that they suffered fatal injuries.

As for the highest ranked officer in this pursuit unit, or in this case, the commander-in-chief was fortunately able to escape from this trouble unhurt. The moment the explosion happened, his aides and the bodyguards surrounded him like a wall so the damage didn't extend to him.

"What... What on earth happened?! Someone give me a report!" He demanded loudly.

"We don't know anything either! No magic attack was launched from the fort at all!" One of the soldiers reported.

The total length of the <Switch Blade> was around 60cm. It was a size that even the Sky Cavalry, in caution, would easily miss in this dark sky. The main cause was also due to its flying sound hidden by the noise of the mass of soldiers moving to attack, and they had only realized it when the bomb impacted.

"Tch! Such an impudent..!" The commander snarled, gnashing his teeth.

The commander judged that the attack came from the guy they were chasing. There was no other reason.

Their headquarters had been attacked directly, and the fort they should be invading was wrapped in a mysterious white smoke. All other details remained unclear. It would be foolish to order the soldiers to charge in when their chain of command was in chaos, and their vision robbed.

Perhaps that smoke was created by the opponent's magician(?). It could be some sort of poison gas barrier or something like that. How should they fight against an opponent that used methods they have never seen before ? The commander hesitated in his decision-making.

Several seconds later, he made his decision. He decided to send for the magic corps since he can't afford to bombard the fort at this time.

"Send my order! Magic corps move forward! Blow off the smoke by bombarding it with fire balls!" He shouted.

Upon the his order, a heavily armed knight wrapped in thick armor and large shields stepped forward to protect the magic corps.

All the members wore a robe with the Alwina Kingdom's crest sewn onto their backs like the typical magician in fantasy tales. They grasped wooden canes with precious stones embedded in them. The canes in this world mainly acted as a booster to amplify the spirit magic of the magicians.

“Prepare! Start the chanting!”

As they were ordered, dozens of magicians started to prepare their chants at once

It was at that time that a shadow began to sway within the white smoke. While all the soldiers' attention were focused onto the figure, their movements came to a stop, and little by little, the shadow inside the smoke started to become clearer. The silhouette inside the white smoke was the figure of person, but it was short and stout. It looked like a knight who was wearing a full plate armor, but something seemed different.

Footsteps were approaching them.

*Gacha, gacha.*

The sound was like the metal clashing against each other. It swaggered around like a man-eating bear's heavy footsteps.

The real nature of the mysterious shadow was revealed in front of several hundred soldiers.

As most of them has expected, the shadow was short and stout, which was because it was wrapped in a protective full body armor. But, the design of the was one unrecognizable by all the Alwinan forces.

The black suit was equipped with shellproof plates and a tactical vest. A protector was added on the shoulders, forearms and knees, but the defence was raised to the level where it would not harm minimum mobility. The tactical vest was loaded with quantities of ammunition and hand grenades.



The next thing that caught their attention was the presence of the items carried by the armoured figure. The ammunition belt was extended from the large bag to the electric gatling gun with 6 gun barrels .

Of course, for the Alwinan soldiers, they couldn't have known the dangers of the person they were facing now.

[TL: I feel like how it was done in the fight between the American-Westerner Vs the Indian.]

While coiled by wisps of white smoke, deep crimson eyes sparkled from within.